

Memo

To: Board of Managers
From: John M. Fitzgerald, Chief of Police
CC: Ms. Shana Davis-Cook, Village Manager
Date: 4/5/2012
Re: Chevy Chase Circle Traffic Safety Concerns

Traffic collisions occur regularly in Chevy Chase Circle, and it is clear from our data that this has been a perennial problem. Simply put, Chevy Chase Circle is far and away our #1 traffic safety problem.¹ Motorists undoubtedly spend a great deal of time and money dealing with the aftermath of the collisions, and our officers spend a great deal of time responding to, investigating and documenting them.

In my view, the vast majority of these collisions could be easily prevented with some relatively inexpensive engineering changes (clear lane controls) at the Circle. There are multiple examples of effectively designed circles throughout the District of Columbia, but Chevy Chase Circle is not one of them. The Circle confuses many motorists, and the collisions will continue until changes are made.

Complicating matters is the fact that the state line essentially bisects the Circle. In order to get something done, both Maryland and DC officials must come to agreement on a solution. I've done a bit of homework, and I have learned that about nine years ago, appropriate authorities from the two jurisdictions discussed this very issue, and they were unable to agree on a solution. The result was that nothing was done. The players on both sides have changed since then, and they have been working well together in resolving a similar problem at the rotary at 16th Street and Route 29 on the state line in Silver Spring.

I am willing to take the lead in a new effort to make the Circle safer. With this memo, I am seeking the Board's input and support prior to embarking on this effort. I would like to get started without delay, and I welcome the Board's ideas and guidance.

¹ There have been 142 collisions on the Maryland side of the Circle in the 5-year period 2007-2011. There have been many collisions on the DC side, as well (I do not have easy access to that data).